

# Washington State Patrol Media Release

*Chief John R. Batiste*



## Office of the State Fire Marshal

Captain Jeff DeVere  
Government and Media Relations  
(360) 753-5299 – office  
(360) 753-5469 – fax  
<http://www.wa.gov/wsp/wsphome.htmff>

**\*\* For immediate release\*\***

**Contact:** Melissa Gannie, Washington State Patrol, (253) 912-4932

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### Fire Mobilization Ordered for the Columbia Complex Fire

State fire assistance has been mobilized to support local firefighters working to contain a wildfire, which is burning approximately 2 miles southwest of Dayton in Columbia County. Washington State Patrol Chief Paul Beckley authorized the State Fire Services Mobilization Plan at 02:45 am on August 22, 2006.

Columbia County fire officials reported several fires, the largest one burning an estimated 2,000 acres, and is threatening approximately 25 homes forcing residents to evacuate. A shelter has been opened at the Dayton High School. Another 500 acre fire is burning near Dayton. In Walla Walla County there are two wildfires burning toward Columbia County. One fire is approximately 200 acres and the other is an estimated 800 acres. The fires started on the evening of the 21<sup>st</sup> and were caused by lightning.

The State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at Camp Murray remains at Phase II, to coordinate state assistance for the Columbia Complex fire. Staff from the Washington State Patrol's Fire Protection Bureau is en route to the fire.

Under the mobilization plan, the Fire Protection Bureau will be coordinating the initial dispatch of firefighters, engines and water tenders. Nine strike teams (consisting of 5 wildland engines and water tender) and a Type 3 Incident Management Team has been ordered. Resources are responding from Skagit, Snohomish, Island, Clark, Cowlitz, Thurston, Grant, Chelan, Douglas and King Counties.

The Southeastern part of Washington has been under a Red Flag Warning for unseasonably hot and dry conditions combined with critical Haines index and very low relative humidity that could potentially result in explosive fire growth conditions. The State Fire Services Mobilization Plan is implemented to provide personnel, equipment and other resources from around the state when wildfires exceed the firefighting capacity of local jurisdictions.

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